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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/796,557	03/09/2004	Craig Van Buuren	10908/9 (MAJR)	1076
757 7590 06/27/2007 BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE P.O. BOX 10395 CHICAGO, IL 60610			EXAMINER FIORITO, JAMES	
			ART UNIT 1754	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 06/27/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/796,557

Applicant(s)

BUUREN, CRAIG VAN

Examiner

James A. Fiorito

Art Unit

1754

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-12 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4/05.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-12, are drawn to an apparatus, classified in class 422, subclass 1.
- II. Claims 13-24, are drawn to a method, classified in class 423, subclass 262.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another and materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the process does not require a plurality of sensors. Therefore, the process may be performed by a materially different apparatus.

During a telephone conversation with Peter Nichols on 6/12/2007 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of II, claims 13-24.

Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action.

Claims 1-12 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37

CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

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The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 13-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Crundwell 2005.

Crundwell teaches a method of controlling a heap leach process through controlling an irrigation rate of a heap as a function of at least one of an aeration rate of the heap, a determination of advection at least at one predetermined point in the heap, and a determination of temperature at least at one predetermined point in the heap. Also disclosed is for the aeration to be forced and for the method to include the step of controlling the aeration rate as a function of a determination of the oxidation rate of material within the heap. The invention also extends to a method for the introduction of microorganisms into the heap of material, a method for increasing the temperature of heap of material for heap leaching, a method of determining an optimum heap configuration for a bio-assisted heap leach process of an ore heap, and a method of enriching the environment of microorganisms embedded in a heap of material for bio-assisted heap leaching (Abstract).

Further, Crundwell teaches that microbiological heap leaching simulation may be performed using laboratory columns (Paragraph 5). Also, Crundwell teaches autothermal conditions of microbiological heap leaching (Paragraph 139).

Crundwell does not expressly state that the simulation monitors the temperature of the material at each of a plurality of location and, in response to the monitored temperatures, controlling heat loss from the confined volume. However, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to perform the simulation by monitoring the temperature of the material at each of a plurality of location and, in response to the monitored temperatures, controlling heat loss from the confined volume. Since the real microbiological heap leaching process uses a plurality of temperature sensors at different points in the heap (Paragraph 34), and it is obvious to use the same process procedures of the real process in the simulation. Further it would be obvious to perform the simulation of the microbiological heap leach requiring a control of the heat loss within the laboratory column to replicate the autothermal conditions of the real leaching process (Paragraph 139) taught by Crundwell.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James A. Fiorito whose telephone number is (571)272-7426. The examiner can normally be reached on 9am - 6pm.

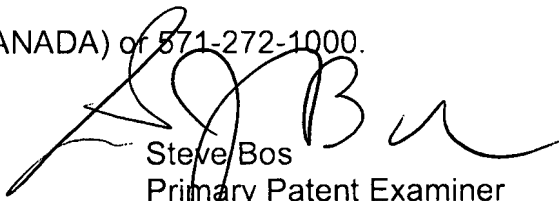
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman can be reached on (571) 272-1358. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

James Fiorito
Patent Examiner
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JF


Steve Bos
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